



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

# NEWS RELEASE

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### **The SBA, RI Foundation, Ocean Community Chamber, & Congressional Delegation Celebrate “Small Business Saturday” with a Walking Tour of Small Businesses in Westerly**

**WESTERLY, RI** –The U.S. Small Business Administration, along with the Rhode Island Foundation and the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, held a walking tour of High Street in Westerly to promote awareness of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “**Small Business Saturday**”. Joined by U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, and Congressman James Langevin, the group visited eight small businesses to highlight local entrepreneurial excellence and encourage others to “Shop Small.”

Created by American Express during the 2010 economic recession, the “Small Business Saturday” initiative spotlights the impact on and importance of small business to the local community and economy.

“Approximately 99% of Rhode Island businesses are small,” said SBA District Director Mark S. Hayward. “That is over 100,000 small businesses that employ over 229,000 people or 52.8% of Rhode Island’s workforce. These businesses employ your friends, family, and neighbors, and by shopping at their establishments you are sending a message that you support them and your community” he added.

The tour began with a brief speaking program followed by visits to Miceli’s Furniture, Nigrelli’s Jewelry & Sons, Vintage Cigar Lounge & Club, The Malted Barley, Melissa Ashley Brides, Bella Vita Salon, and Rhode Island Surf Company, before concluding the tour at Westerly Jewelry Company.

“Small businesses are a major part of our communities and Rhode Island’s economy. Small Business Saturday is a great way to celebrate and support our local merchants as they kick into high gear for the holidays,” said Senator Reed. “Shopping locally can have a big impact on Rhode Island’s economy and offers a lot of advantages. I’m looking forward to joining these small business owners as they gear up for Small Business Saturday.”

“Small Business Saturday” highlights brick and mortar small businesses in a growing landscape of online shopping and big-box stores. Since 2010, “Small Business Saturday” has grown in both participation and scope as all 50 states now celebrate the day. In 2011, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution officially supporting “Small Business Saturday” and encouraging people to “Shop Small”.

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“Finding gifts at locally-owned shops is a great way to support our community throughout the holiday season,” said Senator Whitehouse. “This Small Business Saturday, let’s make it a point to boost the small businesses that are an integral part of Rhode Island’s economy.”

It is estimated, via a survey commissioned by American Express, that in the nine prior iterations of “Small Business Saturday”, \$103 billion in revenue has been generated by small businesses nationwide.

“The wonderful shops, restaurants, and other small businesses that call Rhode Island home are an essential part of our economy,” said Congressman Langevin. “From creating middle-class jobs to providing important services and goods, these establishments ensure a great quality of life for Rhode Islanders. This Small Business Saturday, and throughout the holiday season, I encourage everyone to support the local businesses that contribute to the strength of our very own neighborhoods.”

As “Small Business Saturday” enters its tenth year, its impact on local communities is palpable. American Express estimates that for every dollar spent at a small business in the U.S., approximately 67 cents stays in the local community. So when you “Shop Small” on Small Business Saturday—and all year long—it can help add up to a big impact.

“Rhode Island’s economy is only as strong as our vibrant and diverse community of small businesses,” added Congressman David Cicilline. “Small Business Saturday is an important opportunity to support local restaurants and family-owned shops, and I hope that all Rhode Islanders will join me in doing that as we celebrate the upcoming holidays and year-round.”

For more information on “Small Business Saturday”, visit [www.SBA.gov/saturday](http://www.SBA.gov/saturday) or contact Ryan Brissette at [Ryan.Brisette@sba.gov](mailto:Ryan.Brisette@sba.gov), 401-528-4630.

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## **About the U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).

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